

# City of Renton Customer Information Bulletin

## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

### City of Renton Development Services Division

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[www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov)

### What is an “Accessory Dwelling Unit”?

The Renton Municipal Code defines an accessory dwelling unit as: *“An independent subordinate dwelling unit that is located on the same lot, but not within a single family dwelling. This may include units over detached garages.”*

### In what zones are Accessory Dwelling Units allowed and how do I establish one?

Most residential zones in Renton allow you the opportunity to request that City staff review your proposal for a detached accessory dwelling unit. Commercial, Industrial and Residential Multi-Family (RM) Zones, however, do not allow Accessory Dwelling Units. After verifying that your property is zoned RC, R-1, R-4, R-8, R-10, or R-14 and would potentially allow the unit, the next step would be to request a free preapplication meeting (see handout, attached). Then, if the results of the preapplication meeting are favorable, your next step would be to formally apply for an Administrative Conditional Use Permit.

### What is a Conditional Use Permit, how much does it cost to apply, and how long does it take to process?

A Conditional Use Permit is a discretionary review process in which the Planning Director may make a decision to *approve*, *conditionally approve*, or *deny* the permit. In general, the Conditional Use Permit process takes approximately 4-6 weeks. The application fee is \$2,060.00 and is not refundable should your permit be denied.

### What Other Requirements are Necessary for Approval of an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

- **Architectural Character to be Consistent:** The Accessory Dwelling Unit must be consistent with the architectural character of the primary structure.
- **Owner Occupancy Affidavit Required:** The property owner shall file an affidavit affirming that the owner will occupy the principal dwelling or the Accessory Dwelling Unit.
- **Notice on Title Required:** Additionally, prior to the issuance of building permits the owner shall record a notice on the property title. The notice shall bear the notarized signature of all property owners listed on the property title and include: the legal description of the property, a copy of the approved plans, and the applicable City restrictions and conditions of approval.

### How many Accessory Dwelling Units may be permitted each year?

The City may approve no more than fifty (50) total accessory dwelling units per calendar year.

### Do I need any other permits?

Yes, you will also need a combination building permit from the City of Renton Building Section (425-430-7200, then press the number 4) in order to ensure that you meet the requirements of the International Residential Code (IRC) and other safety-related requirements. Plans are required for the building permit and the timing for this permit is generally 2-4 weeks. We recommend that you complete the Conditional Use Permit process *prior* to applying for the building permit since the Conditional Use Permit must be approved *prior* to issuance of the building permit. See the instructions for residential building permits for further information. No plans or separate permits are required for the associated plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits.

### How large can the dwelling unit be?

No larger than 75% of the size of the primary residence or 800 sq. ft. whichever is smaller. The square foot calculation shall not include porches, exterior stairs, or garages.

### Are there any additional size restrictions beside the 800 square-foot maximum size limit?

The square footage of the Accessory Dwelling Unit will count toward the maximum impervious surface limitation (see table below) and toward the maximum building coverage (see table below).

### What are the impervious surface<sup>1</sup> limitations?

These vary by zone:

Maximum Impervious Surface Area	
RC	<b>Lots 5 acres or more:</b> 20%. <b>Lots 10,000 sq. ft.:</b> 55%. For each additional 10,000 sq. ft. increase in lot size, the impervious coverage shall be decreased by 1.75% to a minimum of 20% for a 5-acre lot. <b>Lots 10,000 sq. ft. or less:</b> 55%.
R-1	30%
R-4	55%
R-8	75%
R-10	<b>Detached units:</b> 75% <b>Attached units:</b> 65%
R-14	85%

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the maximum percentage of the lot that can be paved, graveled, or built upon.

### What is the Building Coverage<sup>1</sup> Limit?

This varies by zone:

Maximum Building Coverage Allowed	
RC	<b>Lots 5 acres or more:</b> 2%. <b>Lots 10,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres:</b> 15%. <b>Lots 10,000 sq. ft. or less:</b> 35%.
R-1	20%
R-4 and R-8	<b>Lots greater than 5,000 sq. ft.:</b> 35% or 2,500 sq. ft., whichever is greater. <b>Lots 5,000 sq. ft. or less:</b> 50%.
R-10 and R-14	None.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the maximum percentage of the lot that can be covered with building footprints.

### How tall can the Accessory Dwelling Unit be?

The accessory dwelling can be no taller than the primary residence and in no case taller than thirty (30') feet.

### Where on a lot may I build an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

That depends on the zoning of the property (see table to follow for minimum required distances/setbacks from the proposed structure to lot lines):

Minimum Front Yard and Minimum Side Yard Along a Street <sup>6</sup>	
RC and R-1	30 ft.
R-4	30 ft. <sup>12, 13</sup> except for small lot clusters <sup>10</sup> where R-8 standards shall apply. <b>Unit with Alley Access Garage:</b> The front yard setback of the primary structure may be reduced to 20 ft. if all parking is provided in the rear yard of the lot with access from a public right-of-way or alley.
R-8	15 ft., except garage/carport setback which shall be 15'
R-10 and R- 14	10' (per administrative interpretation)

<b>Side Yards for Accessory Dwelling Units</b>	
RC	25 ft., except when along a street then 30 ft. <sup>7</sup>
R-1	25 ft., except when along a street then 20 ft. <sup>7</sup>
R-4	15 combined ft. <sup>12, 13</sup> is allowed with a minimum of 5 ft. for any side yard, except when along a street then 20 ft. <sup>12, 13</sup> For small lot clusters 5 ft. is allowed <sup>10</sup> except when along a street then 20 ft.
R-8	5 ft. except when along a street then 15 ft. <sup>7</sup> or when part of an attached garage that accesses from the side yard along a street then 20 ft.
R-10 and R-14	4 ft., except when located on a corner lot then, 8 ft. with an 18 ft. setback from the face of the garage to the back of the curb and/or to any sidewalk or pathway.
<b>Rear Yards for Accessory Dwelling Units</b>	
RC	Determined through administrative review, to be no less than 10 ft. and no greater than 35 ft.
R-1 and R-4	Determined through administrative review, to be no less than 10 ft. and no greater than 25 ft.
R-8	Determined through administrative review, to be no less than 5 ft. and no greater than 20 ft.
R-10 & R-14	Determined through administrative review, to be no less than 5 ft. and no greater than 10 ft.